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Fig. 53. Mold for making tin labrets (tembeta yapua). Prov.: Yumbío. (1/2 nat. size.)

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Mold for Tembetas

The tembeta, or labrets, of the Chiriguano are of tin. They make them themselves with the aid of the mold pictured here (Fig. 53). It is a calabash into which the fins of the labret have been hollowed out, while the thicker central part of the ornament corresponds to the end of a stick going through the calabash. The cavity produced in the central part of the labret is then filled with wax into which glass or turquoise beads are incrusted. These come from ancient burial-places and are sold to the Chiriguano by the half-breeds of Tarija.

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Balances

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The Chiriguano of the upper Pilcomayo and the Igüembé valley prize coca quite as much as the Quichuá of the altiplano. Besides, it is from them that they got this vice. The fact is known and does not need to be demonstrated. This custom

/467 conn./

302 The women never cut their hair according to the custom of the other Indian women of the Chaco, so they have heads of long and remarkably soft hair. They gather their hair together (301) on the nape of the neck by means of a red or blue ribbon, which they knot on the forehead after passing it around the head (see Plate VI, 1 and 2 /see p. 73/).

302 Chiriguano women are extremely meticulous about their hair and wash it nearly every day. For soap they use Sitira seeds.

Fig. 172. Chiriguano stone mortar for crushing Sitira seeds. Prov.: Ivo. (About 1/4 nat. size.)

which they crush in a little mortar (Fig. 172) especially intended for that use. The Sitira seeds, rich in saponin, lather easily.

302 For me it was always a pleasant spectacle in the morning to see the women come back from the river with their hair twisted on the front of the head and fastened into a conical chignon. They would let it dry, then would begin to comb it slowly until it was soft and shining.

412 303 184 Two types of comb coexist among the Chiriguano. On the upper Pilcomayo in the Iglesiambí valley and in Ivo, they are carved out of a small board, and often the flat part which serves as the handle is cut out /469/ with art. In the Caipipendí valley and among the Chané, besides combs of the preceding type there are others composed of fine splinters of wood wedged between two plinters of bamboo and held in place by a clever plaiting of cotton thread forming a design.

/468 cont./

forming a design. Combs of this category generally have a double row of teeth, but sometimes one row is entirely covered by the plaiting and is transformed into a handle (Nordenskiöld, ?, Fig. 109, p. 314). These two kinds of comb are also found in the Andean zone; but whereas the first is limited to this geographical area and especially to northwestern Argentina, the second, which includes all varieties of composite combs, has a vast distribution

Fig. 128. Composite comb made of fine splinters of bamboo. Chiriguano. Prov.: Cerrotí. (1/3 nat. size.)

over all South America, in the Inca Empire as well as in Brazil. The Chiriguano doubtless used them well before they settled in their present location. It is not the same with the comb of carved wood, which they borrowed from the Chicha or the Humahuaca. With regard to two combs in my collections, one (Plate LXXXVII, 14) has a handle carved in the shape of a dog, and the other, a deer (Plate LXXXVII, 15). They strongly resemble a comb found in the Quebrada de Humahuaca, which is also surmounted by the silhouette of a quadruped (Debenedetti, ?, p. 247, Fig. 186). At Kipon in the Calchaquí Valley Debenedetti (1, p. 27, Fig. 16) discovered a comb whose upper part represents a human head, in which our author thinks he sees an idol with a sad expression (!?). The half-breed women of that valley have kept up to our times the ancient indigenous combs of algarroba wood.

/468 cont./

412 191 At La Paya, Ambrosetti (6, Fig. 254, p. 484) discovered combs cut out of a small wooden board and some composite combs. Instead of simply recording the coexistence of two different types of combs /Plate LXXXVII appears here/ /469/ in the same place, a very natural phenomenon by reason of the heterogeneous character of the culture of La Paya, Ambrosetti puts forth the strange hypothesis that these combs served for carding wool, without taking the trouble to inquire whether this instrument was known in pre-Columbian times.

303 322 422 412 The making of combs, like all wood carving, is an essentially masculine job.

The table on Plate LXXXVII indicates my idea of the morphological evolution of the different forms of combs which I have collected.

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Chapter XII

Furniture

352 [114] Since the diverse cultural elements which constitute the furniture of the Chiriguano have been completely studied by Nordenskiöld (10, pp. 8-22), I shall limit myself to mentioning them here, insisting only on several details. /Fig. 124 appears here./ /See p. 338./

[342] Let us enter a Chiriguano hut. The door we open is a kind of screen of reeds or a cowhide hardened in the sun. Daylight penetrates the interior through this opening. The only important

[513] piece of furniture is a wooden cot (Fig. 125), a kind of bedstead generally occupied by two persons between whom one or two children come /470/ to slip in somehow or other. Nor do the Chiriguano hesitate to sleep on the ground on an oxhide, which they spread out in front of their house. On the upper Pilcomayo, in nearly all the huts one can /Fig. 125 appears here/ /See p. 339./ see one or two hammocks which serve either as seats during the day

[286] [197] or as cradles for small children. Their technique, that of the double thread (Doppelfadentechnik), continues an old Guarani

[Text Continues on P. 338]

824 139 [114] /16 cont./ I am going to make a brief list of some trees and plants which I know, without pretending to be a botanist, a subject I have not studied. I shall only say that I have learned it through experience and careful reading; when describing certain plants, I shall also make note of the use made of the bark, root, leaves, and branches of some.

ACACIA BALSAMICA. -- This is the quina-quina, under which name it is known here in Chiriguano country, a tall, straight tree, whose wood is ideal for building because the wood borer does not damage it; it is much used here in the construction of upper roofs, especially for the braches or trusses on which the roof frame is to rest. It is plentiful in Cordillera Province and even in Acero Province.

/17/ ACACIA SAPONARIA. -- This tree is large and its [342] [492] wood light, perhaps even lighter than cedar, but it is of less value; it is whitish and much used for making doors and windows, but the main use to which said wood is put is in saddleries to [296] [515] make pads for saddles. The seeds are similar to monkey ears and are good for washing clothes and to keep the skin of the face free of blemishes; here it is known by the name "timboy."

ACACIA AMARILLA /A. moniliformi/. -- It is a medium-sized tree of rather lightweight hardwood, for which reason drawers or wash basins and yokes for oxen are made with it. [372] It is no good for making fire, because it smells when it burns, from which it gets the Chiriguano name "Tatane," fire that smells; the wood is yellow.

ACACIA ASTRINGENTE. -- There are many groves of [342] [281] trees of this class here and there; it is the most abundant tree, the wood is good for small joists because the wood borer does not eat it; the bark contains much tannin, and it is the wood most used for tanning hides by both Indians and whites; the latter call it sebil and the former "Curupau."

245 137 524 ACHIOTE. BIXA ORELLANA. -- This is cultivated in fields and gardens, grows to a height of two and a half meters, its leaves are dark green; it produces abundant fruit in a sort of pod covered with bristles and filled inside with fiery red seeds, which are what makes the little tree highly valued. They [302] [303] [439] serve as food coloring, and the Chiriguano paint their faces

/17 cont./
245 137 824 [302] [303] [439]
and feet with them, as will be seen; for this last purpose it is prepared beforehand, many pods being boiled in an olla, and pastes of every size are made from the decoction, depending on the value that they wish them to have; it is traded by Chiriguanos and whites.

137 824
The Bixa orellana, or "Urucu," as the Indians call it, is a plant of high value for the Chiriguano; he will travel far to obtain a small amount in the towns or places where it is prepared.

ALGARROBO. -- The place where this extraordinarily large tree abounds is in the pampas; thus in the plain of "Curuyuqui" of Yvu Mission, Isoso, Parapiti, and the Gran Chaco it is found forming forests. It is very bulky and has [342] [415] long branches which on some touch the ground; its trunk is thick and not always erect, the wood is excellent, similar to oak in spite of being dark, and it is much used for making tuns, door and window casings, and even for barrels. In [262] [293] Chiriguano this tree is called /18/ "Ivopei," and the "Ivope" pod is long, compressed, and yellow; when it is ripe, it is sweet and much sought after by livestock and by the Chiriguano; it is their food and drink in times of scarcity as well as other times, and the mead that they make is extremely intoxicating. On the bank of the Pilcomayo even the whites eat this pod; the Toba, Choroti, Mataco, and others hold their orgies when the algarrobo ripens.

ALGARROBO CHICO. -- This is a smaller tree than the previous one, even its fruit is smaller, speckled in color, and sweeter than the true algarrobo, but not as abundant as the [262] first. As the pods are small and the seeds within abundant, it is not highly thought of among the Chiriguano; they only eat it out of necessity or as a tidbit; the wood is not valued very highly because undoubtedly there are others that are better. In Chiriguano it is called "Ivope rai."

ALGARROBO AGRIO. -- This is also small, and it is called [262] "sour" because the flavor of the pods really is sour. In times of scarcity it is also food for the Chiriguano; the pods are small, and the tree has its congenial sites. The Chiriguano Indians call it "Ivopetayi."

/193 cont./

302 137 824 Another of the cosmetics frequently used by men and women is the Carasapa. This is an annual plant with broad leaves, and its stem grows /194/ to the height of a meter or a little more. The color of the plant itself and of its leaves is, for about half of it, somewhere between red and purple. The flower is large and about 30 centimeters long, its color being the same as that of the plant, but much brighter. There is enough of the plant everywhere, but it is not very abundant. The flower is somewhat heavy when it has seeds, and since the stem is slender and flexible, the result is that when it cannot hold itself upright it leans over toward the ground, forming an arch, hence its name Carasapa, or arched plant (1).

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1. At carnival time even the neophytes paint their faces, as do the whites. They buy face paint which the whites sell, and the infidels forsake their achiote at the carnivals.

• 303 When the flower and seed are in season, the coquettes do their harvesting in order to use it, and they look pretty. The Carasapa also has its preparation, without which its application would not be easy. They first grind up some white beans, sift this meal very fine, and then grind the Carasapa in a mortar with a little water, put this mixture in a cloth, squeeze over the bean meal the water which comes out, washing or coloring it, and then dry the dough in the sun, spread out on a cloth or a Cutama. The preparation is not difficult, but not all of them go to the trouble to do it, and for those who prepare it, it is a profitable item.

302 [531] The way to use it is the same as for the achiote, but it does not have any peculiarity, and hence it is only used at fiestas and at carnival time. Maidens beautify their faces by forming two circles of carasapa on their fresh cheeks and paint their eyebrows with achiote. Formerly, when young girls wore the Atira, pompadour /copete/, at fiestas it was painted with the carasapa mixture, after having been oiled with palma Christi.